

# Biden to host Jordan's King Abdullah on July 19: White House

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WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden will host King Abdullah of Jordan at the White House on July 19, the White House said on Wednesday.

Biden reaffirmed strong US support for the monarch shortly after the kingdom announced it had quashed a rift within the royal family that shook Jordan's image as a beacon of stability in the region.

"His Majesty's visit will highlight the enduring and strategic partnership between the United States and Jordan, a key security partner and ally of the United States," the White House said in a statement.

"It will be an opportunity to discuss the many challenges facing the Middle East and showcase Jordan's leadership role in promoting peace and stability in the region."

Abdullah is on a three-week visit to the United States that will include Biden's first meeting with an Arab leader at the White House since taking office, a July 1 statement from the palace said.

Abdullah strongly opposed former US President Donald Trump's Middle East peace plan, which he saw as a national security threat that would also undermine his Hashemite family's custodianship of holy sites in Jerusalem. Officials say the shift in US policy under Biden toward a more traditional commitment to a two-state solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict has relieved pressure on Jordan, where a majority of the population of 10 million are Palestinians.



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## [Egypt in diplomatic push at UN over GERD](#)

Author:

Wed, 2021-07-07 20:34

CAIRO: Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry will participate in a special session of the UN Security Council on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on Thursday.

Shoukry continued his intensive meetings in New York with several of his ministerial counterparts, permanent delegates of Security Council member states, and officials of the UN, to reiterate Egypt's firm position on the issue.

He emphasized Egypt's desire to reach a binding legal agreement on the filling and operating of the dam that takes into account the interests of the three countries involved – Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia – while preserving Egypt's water rights.

Shoukry also held a meeting with the African Union group, comprising the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa and Senegal, to explain the Egyptian position.

He held similar meetings with the permanent representatives of Russia and China in the Security Council and stressed the need for the council to assume its responsibilities toward this issue.

In televised statements, he said that negotiations with Ethiopia would not be indefinite, adding that Egypt and Sudan must defend their water interests in the Nile.

Shoukry said Egypt seeks a peaceful solution to the issue through negotiation with Ethiopia.

He said Egypt aims to defuse any tension or escalation, explaining that it is the responsibility of the Security Council to work with preventive diplomacy.

The minister said the issue of the dam is of utmost importance due to its direct connection to Egypt's national security and considers it an "existential issue."

He reiterated Egypt and Sudan's rejection of the unilateral measure taken by Ethiopia, which started the second filling of the GERD this week.



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# Ethiopia 'driving a wedge between Arab League and African Union'

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Wed, 2021-07-07 21:02

CAIRO: An official source at the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States has expressed dissatisfaction over Ethiopia's statement in its recent letter to the UN Security Council on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) issue.

The Arab League announced last month it was backing the Security Council intervention, despite Ethiopia's insistence that talks proceed under an existing process led by the African Union.

Ethiopia said on Tuesday that it rejected "unwelcome meddling" by the Arab League in a long-running dispute with Egypt and Sudan over the mega-dam on a tributary of the Nile River.

The statement from the Foreign Ministry came as Egypt voiced its anger at the renewed filling of the GERD reservoir.

"Ethiopia rejects the unwelcome meddling by the League of Arab States on the matter of the GERD following the league's submission of a letter to the UN Security Council and UN General Assembly to intervene in the matter," Ethiopia's statement said.

"The League of Arab States has a reputation for its unfettered and unconditional support to any claim Egypt has presented on the issue of the Nile," it added.

In response, the Arab League source said Ethiopia's statement could undermine the friendly and cooperative relations between the league and the African Union.

The source said that Ethiopia's message contained many inaccuracies, but "the most dangerous thing was the clear attempt to drive a wedge between two regional organizations that have maintained close and solid relations."

The Arab League is not about to engage in any form of controversy or confrontation with the African Union, especially since its members include 10 Arab countries, the source added, noting that the league maintains different and multiple frameworks and mechanisms for consultation and joint action with the African Union.



The league's intervention in the dam is logical since the issue affects the interests of two of its members, Egypt and Sudan, the source said.

According to the source, Ethiopia is seeking to portray the issue as an Arab-African conflict, "which is wrong and causes alarm."

The source called on Addis Ababa to review its "unhelpful approach."



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Saudi Arabia offers support for Egypt, Sudan in Ethiopia dam disputeUS, UN call on all parties in Ethiopia dam dispute to refrain from unilateral actions

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## [US calls on all parties in Ethiopia dam to refrain from unilateral actions](#)

Tue, 2021-07-06 21:26

WASHINGTON: The US on Tuesday called on all parties in the Ethiopia dam issue to refrain from any unilateral actions, a day after Ethiopia began filling the dam's reservoir.

US State Department spokesman Ned Price said Ethiopia's announcement that it has started to fill the Grand Renaissance Dam has the potential to raise

tensions.

The United Nations called on Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt on Tuesday to recommit to talks on the operation of the giant hydropower dam, urging them to avoid any unilateral action.

The UN Security Council will likely discuss the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam this week after Arab states requested the 15-member body address the issue.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres backs the role of the African Union in mediating between the countries, Guterres' spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters in New York.

"What is also important, that there be no unilateral action that would undermine any search for solutions. So, it's important that people recommit themselves to engage in good faith in a genuine process," Dujarric said on Tuesday.

Ethiopia said the dam on its Blue Nile is crucial to its economic development and providing power to its population.

Egypt views the dam as a grave threat to its Nile water supplies, on which it is almost entirely dependent. Sudan, another downstream country, has expressed concern about the dam's safety and the impact on its own dams and water stations.

"Solutions to this need to be guided by example ... by solutions that have been found for others who share waterways, who share rivers, and that is based on the principle of equitable and reasonable utilization and the obligation not to cause significant harm," Dujarric said.

Egypt's irrigation minister said on Monday he had received official notice from Ethiopia that it had begun filling the reservoir behind the dam for a second year. Egypt said it rejected the measure as a threat to regional stability.



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## [Song Day brings Yemenis together despite war](#)

Tue, 2021-07-06 21:26



ALEXANDIRIA: If war and politics have divided Yemen, songs and music have brought its people together.

A group of Yemeni singers, musicians and activists have called upon Yemenis to mark July 1 as Yemeni Song Day to bring to life and protect traditional and modern Yemeni music.

“Following our keen interest in the Yemeni identity, heritage and culture, a group of friends, artists, poets, composers, activists and influencers decided to launch what we called Yemeni Song Day,” Yahya Anbah, a Yemeni singer said, calling on people from all walks of life to join the campaign.

The initiative drew positive responses as artists, celebrities, politicians and ordinary people shared their songs, turning social media into a massive online concert.

From the Houthi-held Sanaa to the government-controlled parts of Taiz, Yemenis arranged musical activities that attracted large gatherings. Local artists sang famous songs as their delighted fans danced.

In Sanaa, wearing traditional dress, Fatima Muthanna, a young singer, sang patriotic songs. On her Facebook page, which has more than 83,000 followers, she urged Yemenis to use music as a “weapon” to bring about peace in the war-torn country.

“Singing is our only outlet in this life. This microphone is my weapon and the weapon of every artist carrying the message of peace, love and affection,” she said.



In the southern city of Taiz, not far from the battlefield, the local office of the Ministry of Culture arranged a concert to celebrate, which brought

together local singers to entertain the public.

Some Yemenis celebrated by sharing short clips of themselves singing and dancing while doing their daily household chores.

Alfat Al-Dubae, an activist, sang local songs while cooking food. "My voice is not beautiful, but this festival forces even those who cannot sing to sing," she said on Facebook.

Some shared photos with famous singers, while others remembered dead singers such as the Yemeni-born Saudi national Abu Bakr Salem Belfkih.

Ahmed Fatehi, a Yemeni singer, composer and oud player, performed duets with others. Fatehi called upon Yemeni officials to honor veteran musicians and help poor families of dead singers.



"The officials should express their gratitude to the pioneers of Yemeni music by visiting their families and giving them moral and financial assistance," the singer told Arab News, adding that some old-timers died because they couldn't afford medical treatment.

International cultural, educational and heritage organizations also participated in the campaign by sharing their funded programs for reviving Yemeni musical heritage.

The UNESCO office for the Gulf Cooperation Council and Yemen said on Twitter that the song "Al-Ghana Al-Sanaani" was listed as part of the world's heritage in 2008, and that it was working with Yemen's authorities to add more songs to the list.

The Saudi Development and Reconstruction Program for Yemen posted on Twitter: "Yemeni songs reflect the musical heritage and are a cultural marker of the



people of Yemen. On #YemeniSongDay, we celebrate the melodies of the past and present-day Yemen.”

In addition to the war, Yemenis attributed the massive response to the festival to the growing moral policing of people by the Iran-backed Houthis.

The rebels have banned people from hiring singers for weddings and launched a crackdown on arts, models and actors.

Tweeting from Sanaa, Khaled Al-Ruwaishan, a former minister of culture, said Yemenis challenged the Houthi’s repressive rules on arts and music by singing and observing Yemeni Song Day.

“They tried to ban singing in the countryside of Sanaa. The people responded by singing, and making a festival for it. What a response. Our people are alive and our soul is glowing despite all the sorrows,” the former minister said.

Yemen’s Ministry of Information, Tourism and Culture gave the campaign official recognition by announcing that July 1 would be recognized as the official Yemeni Song Day, and announced it would establish a museum for Yemeni music in the southern port city of Aden.





Hamza Mustafa







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